To the Chriſtian World!

A PLAIN

SERMON

ON AN

IMPORTANT SUBJECT,

WRITTEN

To every BODY, and preached before NOBODY; concerning the proper Entrance into a noble MANSION; but more particularly addreſſed to the celebrated

Dr. PRIESTLEY,

AND HIS FOLLOWERS.

But if we walk in the Light, as he is in the light, we have fellowſhip one with another, and the BLOOD of JESUS CHRIST his SON, cleanſeth us from *all* Sin.

1 Epiſtle of John, Chap. i. v. 7

Be wiſe to Day, 'tis madneſs to defer. YOUNG.

BY JAMES RAY, M. A.

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A SERMON.

x Chapter of St. John's Goſpel, and 9 Verſe.

I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he ſhall be ſaved, and go in, and out, and find paſture.

THERE is a wonderful plainneſs and ſimplicity in ſcripture, which manifeſts the great condeſcenſion and love of *GOD* towards mankind his workmanſhip.——As man is an infinite creature, and hath formed his conceptions, and ideas from ſenſible objects,

objects, God hath thought proper to reveal his mind and will, to his creatures in ſuch phraſes that are levelled to their capacities, and underſtandings: for if we have not ſuitable ideas of what we affirm, and of what we hear, we diſcourſe but confuſedly, or hear the inſtructions of others with little profit and improvement.

It is obſervable that thoſe writers or ſpeakers, who uſe parables or ſimilitudes in their inſtructions, are the moſt pleaſing and improving to mankind, and particularly in moral, and religious ſubjects. Therefore our bleſſed Saviour who knew the hearts of all men, thus adapted

dapted himſelf to the weak underſtandings of mortals, by ſenſible repreſentations----As in the paſſage before us which I have choſen for my text. But to wave all curious diſquiſitions, I ſhall attempt to explain it in the plaineſt manner I poſſibly can; that every one who hears, or reads it, may be left without the leaſt ſhadow of a doubt reſpecting its meaning.

I. I will endeavour to prove that CHRIST alone is Mediator between God and Man, the *only* Saviour.

II. That his Salvation will be a ſufficient entertainment, and per-

permanent felicity to all thoſe who are his true Deſciples.

III. I ſhall draw a few inferences whereby we may judge whether we are his Deſciples indeed.

Firſt, I will endeavour to prove, that CHRIST alone is the Mediator between God and Man.

It is an obvious truth demonſtrated both from reaſon and ſcripture, that mankind are, and have degenerated from their original purity; and conſequently are unfit for Heaven, or to participate of the joys thereof, until there be ſome alteration made in their ſouls, or minds. All thoſe who are converſant with their Bibles,

Bibles, may be informed that GOD made Man in his own Image, that is, he made him pure, innocent, and holy like himſelf, with reſpect to his mind, and his intellectual faculties; but that Adam and his wife Eve not being contented with their *then* preſent ſituation, (being inſtigated by the Devil) wiſhed to be ſtill happier, than they then were; broke, or violated the divine command, by taſting the fruit of the forbidden tree which was in the garden of Eden, and by that preſumptuous act, forfeited their preſent, and future happineſs, and brought a malediction or curſe upon themſelves, and all their poſterity!---And in conſequence thereof, have involved

or included us in all the curſes of the fall.

I ſay, they forfeited their preſent and future happineſs! Their preſent happineſs conſiſted of peace, innocence, and tranquility, in being placed in the moſt delightful garden where they had every thing that could pleaſe the eye, or gratify the taſte. And their future happineſs was forfeited by the ſame means, that is, they were ſhut out of Paradiſe, and likewiſe out of their celeſtial abodes; and were deprived of all hopes of ever being admitted into their Maker's favour and eſteem;—But the great God took pity on their ſad caſe, and did not forſake the works of

his own Hands; but promiſed that the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's Head, that is, that he would in future time ſend one who ſhould reinſtate them in the favour of their offended SOVEREIGN! and this Perſon was CHRIST; who hath in the Text, condeſcendingly compared himſelf to a Door, which is the uſual Entrance into a Houſe.---So that it may with Propriety be ſaid of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, that he is the Door of Heaven.

The Paſsport to Joys eternal!---

Thoſe who have attempted to advance any other Doctrine were but Theives, and Robbers. Robbers, in the baſeſt ſenſe; who were robbing Mankind of all that could be dear to them, they would be

be depriving them of permanen
felicity and happineſs.

Our bleſſed LORD knew th
Prejudices of the Jews againſt hi
as the Meſſiah, tho his---Divinit
and Deity were proved by nume
rous Miracles, which none coul
do but himſelf, ſuch as raiſing th
Dead; giving ſight to the Blin
Healing the ſick!---Multiplying
ſmall Quantity of Food to fee
and ſatiſfy the hungry Multitud

Theſe were Proofs, inconteſtib
Demonſtrations of his GOD HE
and Divinity!---Yet notwithſta
ding all theſe Miracles, wroug
in the Face of the Jews; th
would not believe him to be t
true Meſſiah.

they expected a temporal Prince one who should appear in splendor and Magnificence, a great one who would suppress the Roman Power, and conquer by fire and sword; but CHRIST was all Meekness, Condescension, Poverty and Meanness in their Eyes, not corresponding with their exalted Ideas of a Saviour, and in consequence of this erroneous opinion they entirely rejected *him* as a saviour; our blessed Lord knew their unbelief, and sharply rebuked them by telling them, that tho, they so arrogantly despised him, yet he was the true--- Messiah, he was the good shepherd, who would lay down his life for his sheep, and that his Disciples or Followers would hear his voice and

and follow him, that is, that they would embrace his Doctrine and live conformably thereto. As he declared my ſheep hear my Voice, and follow me, and the voice of a ſtranger they will not regard. And in another place he ſaid for our Encouragement, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and if any man believe in me, he ſhall not periſh bnt enjoy Peace, and have everlaſting Life, and that none ſhould pluck them, out of his father's Hands!

What gracious and comfortable promiſes are theſe, founded on ſo good Authority, we have the Veracity of God the father of *GOD* the SON, that if we embrace him as our ſhepherd, we may

may be assured that happiness will be our Portion.—May every one here present receive CHRIST as their only Saviour, by whose Merits and Mediatation we are redeemed from the curse of the law, and are made acceptable in the sight of GOD; which leads me to the,

II. Proposition, namely, That his Salvation will be a sufficient entertainmcnt, and permanent felicity to all those who are CHRIST's true Disciples. ---- the salvation! purchased by our SAVIOUR, is a permanent, lasting, and durable SALVATION, commensurate with ETERNITY, and durable as GOD himself. Where there is no Diminution of Felicity, but continual, and various Scenes of Pleasure, and Delight; at God's right-Hand there are pleasures for ever-more! There, the fulness of the God-Head dwells bodily, where Afflictions Troubles, anxieties and Pains, have no Entrance; but all the Inhabitants will, and do enjoy uninterrupted Peace, Tranquility, and Joy, in contemplating the beautific Vision,—in adoring

the blessed JESUS,——in beholding the Glories of his Kingdom; the Winders of his Love and the Riches of his Grace—conversing with the redeemed of the LORD, and with the spirits of "Just Men made perfect.

These Joys far surpass our narrow Understandings while we are in the Flesh, but we may be assured of the Truth; and Reality of them as they are revealed in the Word of God; and by faith in that Word we may be assured, even to a Demonstration of the Certainty, of them.

Surely these Joys are worth contending for,—that Pearl of great Price will fully compensate for all the troudles of this life. Whatever we enjoy here is temporal, transient, and changeable; but the Joys of Heaven will never cloy, but will always afford Satisfaction and Entertainment.—*there* we may go in, and out, and find Pasture! THERE, we may find rational, Entertainment, and

unspeakable

unſpeakable Delight!---Such as Eye hath not ſeen, ear heard neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive, its pure, rational, and intellectual entertainments.--- As refreſhing as a green paſture is to the beaſts of the field, when excited by the keeneſt Hunger, ſo and ten thouſand times more, will the Paſtures or Joys of Heaven be to the ſoul, who wiſhes. and longs, and ſincerely deſires the Happineſs thereof who thinks it his meat and drink, to do the will of his Father who is in Heaven.

Whatever Pleaſures we are fond of Here, though we ſeem to have the higheſt Gratification from them; how ſoon they cloy and pall the Appetite, and render them even diſguſting to us!

But the Pleaſures of Eternity, and the Joys of Heaven, have not this Bane mixed with them, the Reaſon is obvious; the one is *temporal*, and the other *eternal*, the one proceeds from GOD the Fountain of all perfection; and the other from a periſhable, changeable, World; from a World that the wiſeſt of Men pronounced after repeated experiences in every Scene of Pleaſure, to be *wholly* Vanity and Vexation of Spirit, No ways adapted to an immortal mind, ſuch as that of Man.

And ſurely we may be convince from the Wiſdom of Solomon, that nothing here below is worthy our too anxious Purſuit.----I defy all the Senſualiſts in the univerſe, to produce one Pleaſure that can give Satisfaction to the mind of a religious Man; to produce one Pleaſure that can be compared

ared with the preſent, and future Pleaſures, which flow from virtue and Religion: How many Perſons there are, who form to themſelves wrong Eſtimations of things, who call Good, evil, and evil, good, who put Darkneſs for Light, and Light for Darkneſs, who loſe themſelves both Soul and Body in one continued rounnd of Diſſipation and Debauchery.----Whilſt their Fortunes are ruined, their Health deſtroyed, and their good names and Reputations blaſted, merely becauſe they have been purſuing their Cheif GOOD. Miſtaken mortals!

Self deluded Victim's! Who fall a ſacrifice to their own fooliſh Credulity by a paſſionate fondneſs

fondneſs for Pleaſures falſly ſo called! Would to GOD they could ſee the Error of their ways before it be too late, before their Feet ſtumble on the DARK-MOUNTAINS! When there cannot poſſibly be any hopes of Redemption!

Dreadful ſituation *indeed!*

III. I ſhall draw a few Inferences from the whole whereby we may judge whether *we* are the true Diſciples of CHRIST *indeed.*

Firſt, Not to believe and rely on the Divinity of Chriſt is to forfeit our eternal Salvation, *as there is no other Name under Heaven given*

given among men, whereby they can be ſaved, but by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt as he is the rock of Ages and SAVIOUR of the World. But a bare faith in his, Divinity, will not ſave us, an hiſtorical Belief of the Miracles he wrought, will not be ſufficient; but we muſt love his name, and ſtrive to promote his Religion among men by our Example, by Virtue, Piety and ſincerity, for a Tree is known by its fruit, that is, the CHRISTIAN is known by his Life and converſation, whether he be a Chriſtian INDEED

Whether he adorns the Doctrine of GOD our SAVIOUR in *all* things.

Theſe

These my Brethren are the moſt ſtriking out-Lines of the Chriſtian Character; and if we fall ſhort of them, we had better never have known the Scriptures, nor the ways of Righteouſneſs.--- But why do I mention Scripture? There are many who never read them, and many who do read them, pay no regard to them, altho' they were written for our Admonition and Inſtruction.

What folly and Madneſs: to contemn the only Means of Salvation which God hath appointed for the Recovery of a loſt Race. for the final Felicity of fallen Man. O how can we eſcape if we neglect ſo great Salvation!

II. And laſtly to conclude.

Are

Are there not many who deem themselves religious. even amongst the DISSENTERS who reject the GOD-HEAD and DIVINITY of CHRIST particularly the Socinians. such as the famous popular Dr, P------Y, and his Advocates Pray where can their hopes of Salvation be, if they deny the Almighty Salvation of CHRIST, if they degrade his Divinity to a mere man: if he be only exhibited as nothing but a Pattern of Virtue to his Followers; and not Co---equal with GOD in Power, Majesty, and Authority. Where I say must they flee for Refuge if their own moral Rectitude be not sufficient to recommend them to God? Let me advise you my dear Friends to rely upon the

good

good Shepherd---attend to his Voice follow him, who by his Almighty Power and ſovereign Authority will lead you into the Paths of Happineſs and Peace, where there are Rivers of Pleaſure and joy for ever more! May God of his infinite Mercy grant a Bleſſing to this Diſcourſe for the Sake of his dear ſon Jeſus Chriſt who liveth and reigneth co-equal and co-eternal witn the father, to whom be Glory honour and Dominion now and for ever more, A M E N!

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